



Garden Tips

November 2009

UPDATE: Preparing The People's Garden Soil for Next Season

As with any new garden, developing soil structure and good fertility takes time. While the People's Garden harvested over 300 lbs of vegetables during this first successful season, the quality of its soil cannot be determined by measuring only crop yield. If the People's Garden has good soil quality, then it will have productive land and be a healthy environment for people and wildlife.

Testing the Soil

- The People's Garden underwent a soil quality assessment to determine how well the soil performs all of its functions now and how those functions are being preserved for future use.
- USDA Soil Scientists visited the People's Garden and observed that the soil surface of the raised beds was crusting.

The Problem

- Crusting causes the surface of the soil to be much more compact, hard and brittle when dry.
- It prevents water from soaking into the soil, and increases runoff and erosion.
- Crusting can negatively affect seed germination and the development of healthy seedlings.

Solving the Problem

- Cultural practices like rotating crops, maintaining year round ground cover like cover crops and mulches, and adding organic matter such as compost are being implemented to improve the health of our soil.
- Soil is the foundation on which communities are built, and healthy soils produce healthy crops.

Remember to leave your soil in better shape than you found it for future generations.



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